

Empirical Paper

The Effect of Work Climate and Job Satisfaction on Teachers' Work Motivation at Public Junior High Schools in Komda Tayu, Pati Regency, Indonesia

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Abstract

Purpose: This study examines the effects of work climate and job satisfaction on teachers' work motivation among civil servant teachers in public junior high schools in Komda Tayu, Pati Regency, Indonesia, testing their simultaneous contribution within a single structural model.

Methodology: A quantitative, cross-sectional design was used. Data were collected from 100 civil servant teachers, selected via proportional random sampling from a population of 134, using a validated Likert-scale questionnaire, and analysed with Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) in SmartPLS 4, with bootstrapping of 5,000 resamples.

Results: The measurement model showed strong reliability and validity ($AVE \geq 0.731$; $CR \geq 0.956$). Work climate had a large, significant positive effect on work motivation ($\beta = 0.792$, $t = 7.315$, $p < .001$, $f^2 = 4.098$), while job satisfaction showed a small, non-significant effect ($\beta = 0.168$, $t = 0.872$, $p = .384$). Together, both predictors explained 90.5% of the variance in motivation ($R^2 = 0.905$; $SRMR = 0.069$).

Novelty and Contribution: This study offers one of the few structural tests jointly examining work climate and job satisfaction as predictors of teacher motivation in a previously unstudied local context, showing that organisational climate substantially outweighs individual satisfaction in predicting motivation among Indonesian public-school civil servant teachers.

Practical and Social Implications: Findings suggest school leaders and policymakers should prioritise cultivating a supportive organisational climate over satisfaction-based incentives to sustain teacher motivation, professional engagement, and ultimately student learning outcomes.

Keywords: Work Climate, Job Satisfaction, Teachers' Work Motivation, Self-Determination Theory, Organisational Climate Theory

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1 Introduction

Teachers occupy a strategic position in shaping students' academic competence and character through the educational processes carried out in schools (Jumatullailah et al., 2024). Discharging this role effectively requires more than professional, pedagogical, social, and personal competence; it also requires a sustained internal drive to perform, namely work motivation (Shikalepo, 2020). Work motivation is commonly understood as the internal and external forces that energise, direct, and sustain the effort individuals invest in reaching valued goals (Van den Broeck et al., 2021). Among teachers, this motivation underlies instructional quality, professional engagement, and willingness to innovate, all of which eventually feed into student learning outcomes and broader school development (Taqwim, 2024).

Several studies have explored how this motivation shapes teacher performance. For example, Oladimeji and Amoo (2025) found that salary satisfaction, working conditions, professional development opportunities, and administrative support significantly influence motivation among teachers in Nigeria. Similarly, Katel (2024) found that motivated teachers are more likely to invest in continuous professional development, employ innovative teaching methods, and cultivate a conducive learning environment that supports student success.

Two organisational and psychological conditions are commonly proposed as levers for teachers' work motivation: the climate of the school as a workplace, and teachers' satisfaction with their jobs. Work climate refers to teachers' shared perceptions of the practices, leadership behaviour, interpersonal relationships, and institutional support that characterise their school as a place to work (Schneider et al., 2017). Job satisfaction, in turn, refers to teachers' evaluative and affective responses to their job and the conditions surrounding it, including compensation, security, relationships, and opportunities for growth (Suriagiri et al., 2022). Both constructs have intuitive appeal as antecedents of motivation, yet the empirical record on how strongly, and under what conditions, each one actually predicts motivation is mixed.

Two theoretical lenses guide the present study's account of why climate and satisfaction might matter for motivation: Organisational Climate Theory, rooted in Halpin and Croft's (1963) analysis of school climate and Self-Determination Theory, which explains motivation as a function of the degree to which the environment supports the basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2020; Ryan & Deci, 2000). These two frameworks are treated in depth in the literature review; together, they justify treating work climate as a structural, organisational-level condition and job satisfaction as an individual evaluative state.

Empirical support for the climate–motivation link has accumulated mainly in other regions of Indonesia and abroad (Oladimeji & Amoo, 2025; Shikalepo, 2020; Taqwim, 2024), while the relationship between job satisfaction and motivation has produced less consistent results, with some studies suggesting the pathway depends on broader organisational and contextual conditions (Grace et al., 2025; Sahito & Vaisanen, 2017). Evidence that jointly examines both constructs, using a rigorous structural model, within the specific context of public junior high schools in the Komda Tayu area of Pati Regency, remains limited. This is a meaningful gap: local governance arrangements, resource constraints, and leadership norms in this sub-district may shape how climate and satisfaction operate differently than in the settings where prior studies were conducted.

Addressing this gap, the present study examines: (1) the effect of work climate on teachers' work motivation; (2) the effect of job satisfaction on teachers' work motivation; and (3) the simultaneous effect of work climate and job satisfaction on teachers' work motivation, among civil servant teachers in public junior high schools in the Komda Tayu area, Pati Regency using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). Beyond its local relevance, the study contributes to educational management literature by testing, within a single structural model, whether an organisational-level condition (climate) or an individual evaluative state (satisfaction) more strongly accounts for teachers' motivation, a distinction with direct implications for how school leaders prioritise their limited resources for teacher development.

2 Literature Review

Teachers' Work Motivation

Work motivation is considered an essential catalyst for the success of organisations, as it promotes employees' effective performance. To achieve an organisation's objectives, the employer depends on the performance of their

employees (Vo et al., 2022). A large body of self-determination research distinguishes autonomous motivation, intrinsic interest, together with well-internalised extrinsic reasons for acting, from controlled motivation, which is driven by external pressure or internal compulsion (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Van den Broeck et al.'s (2021) meta-analysis of 124 samples found that autonomous motivation is the strongest predictor of employee well-being, attitudes, and discretionary behaviour, while more internalised but still extrinsic forms of motivation (identified regulation) are comparatively better predictors of performance. Applied to teachers, this distinction matters because motivation of an autonomous kind is expected to translate more reliably into sustained instructional effort, willingness to innovate, and professional engagement, whereas motivation sustained mainly by external pressure is more fragile and more easily eroded by an unsupportive work environment (Gusrianto et al., 2025; Näkk & Timoštšuk, 2021).

Work Climate and Organisational Climate Theory

Organisational climate can be understood as the shared way members perceive an organisation's policies, practices, and procedures, both formal and informal, along with how governance itself is defined within it (Nabella et al., 2022). In the school setting, this translates into teachers' shared perceptions of leadership style, interpersonal relationships among staff, and the level of institutional support they receive in carrying out their duties (Barnová et al., 2022). The theoretical foundation for treating climate as an organisational-level determinant of behaviour traces to Halpin and Croft's (1963) landmark study of school climate, which characterised schools along an open-to-closed continuum defined by principals' leadership behaviour (for example, aloofness versus supportiveness) and teachers' collective behaviour (for example, disengagement versus esprit).

Recent empirical work continues to support the proposition that school climate is consequential for teachers' motivational and behavioural outcomes. Studies conducted in Indonesian secondary schools report that organisational climate significantly predicts teacher motivation and professionalism (Warningsih & Purba, 2025), and that a positive school climate is associated with stronger teacher performance (Habibi et al., 2025). This pattern is not confined to the Indonesian context: in a large survey of more than 2,000 preschool teachers in China, Zhang et al. (2024) found that kindergartens' organisational climate directly predicted teachers' innovative teaching behaviour, and also predicted it indirectly through teachers' sense of teaching efficacy, evidence that climate operates on teachers' motivation-related behaviour through both direct and psychological pathways. Consistent with this, climate and supportive leadership have also been shown to buffer teachers against stress and emotional exhaustion during periods of institutional strain (Collie, 2021), underscoring climate's role not only in sustaining motivation but in protecting it under adverse conditions.

Job Satisfaction as a Predictor of Work Motivation

Job satisfaction is teachers' evaluative and affective response to their job and the conditions surrounding it: compensation, security, interpersonal relationships, and opportunities for professional growth (Sahito & Vaisanen, 2020). Satisfaction and motivation are conceptually related but distinct: satisfaction is chiefly a backwards-looking appraisal of one's current job conditions, whereas motivation is the forward-looking energisation of effort toward goals (Montuori et al., 2022). Empirically, job satisfaction has been linked to related constructs such as teachers' self-efficacy and is often assumed, by extension, to feed into stronger work motivation (Granziera & Perera, 2019). Yet the evidence for a direct, uniformly positive satisfaction-to-motivation pathway is less settled than the evidence for climate. Otrębski (2022) found that the relationship between job satisfaction and teacher motivation is contingent on broader organisational and contextual determinants, implying that satisfaction alone — detached from the surrounding organisational climate — may be an insufficient driver of motivation. This mixed evidence base is the central empirical tension the present study is designed to test directly by placing work climate and job satisfaction in the same structural model.

Self-Determination Theory as an Integrative Framework

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) offers a psychological mechanism that helps explain why an organisational condition such as climate, and an individual evaluative state such as satisfaction, might differ in how strongly they drive motivation (Gagné & Deci, 2005). SDT holds that autonomy, competence, and relatedness are basic, universal

psychological needs; when an environment supports these needs, individuals experience autonomous motivation and psychological well-being, and when the environment frustrates these needs, motivation and well-being deteriorate (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2020). Applied to educational institutions, Ryan and Deci (2020) note that teachers' own motivation is itself shaped by the institutional conditions surrounding them, including leadership style and the degree of autonomy-support versus controlling pressure embedded in school policy, creating a dynamic link between the school's organisational climate and teachers' internalised motivation to teach.

Viewed through this lens, work climate is plausibly a stronger and more direct predictor of teachers' motivation because it operationalises need-support at the level of the whole organisation: a supportive, collegial, and communicative climate simultaneously signals autonomy (teachers are trusted and involved in decisions), relatedness (positive interpersonal relationships among colleagues and with leadership), and competence (recognition and institutional support for professional growth) (Ryan & Deci, 2024). Job satisfaction, by contrast, is best understood as one possible downstream outcome of need satisfaction rather than a need-supportive condition in itself; a teacher may report satisfaction with specific job features (pay, security) without those features necessarily signalling that autonomy, competence, and relatedness are being actively supported by the organisation (Chen et al., 2026). This theoretical asymmetry is consistent with the broader workplace literature showing that autonomous, need-supported motivation is the more robust predictor of positive outcomes relative to more instrumentally driven states (Van den Broeck et al., 2021), and it provides the conceptual rationale for the model tested in this study.

Synthesis and Research Gap

Collectively, the reviewed literature supports three propositions: first, that organisational climate, grounded in Organisational Climate Theory, is a well-evidenced predictor of teacher motivation and related professional behaviour across both Indonesian and international settings (Habibi et al., 2025; Warningsih & Purba, 2025); second, that job satisfaction is meaningfully associated with teachers' affective and professional states but shows a less consistent, more contextually dependent relationship with motivation itself (Granziera & Perera, 2019); and third, that Self-Determination Theory offers a coherent psychological explanation for why climate, as a need-supportive organisational condition, may exert a stronger influence on motivation than satisfaction, as an individual evaluative state (Gagné & Deci, 2005). What remains underexamined is a direct, simultaneous test of both constructs within a single structural model, in a specific local context, public junior high schools in the Komda Tayu area, Pati Regency, where local leadership norms and resource conditions have not previously been studied through this lens. This gap motivates the conceptual framework and hypotheses developed in the next section.

Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses

Building on Organisational Climate Theory and Self-Determination Theory, the conceptual framework of this study positions work climate (X1) and job satisfaction (X2) as two exogenous variables jointly and separately predicting teachers' work motivation (Y), the endogenous variable. Work climate is modelled as the organisational-level, need-supportive condition emphasised by Halpin and Croft (1963): teachers' shared perceptions of leadership behaviour, collegial relationships, and institutional support. Job satisfaction is modelled as teachers' individual evaluative response to job conditions (Granziera & Perera, 2019), theoretically positioned as a state that may follow from, but does not by itself guarantee, the psychological need-satisfaction that Self-Determination Theory identifies as the engine of autonomous motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2020).

On this basis, work climate is expected to exert a direct and comparatively strong effect on teachers' motivation, since a supportive climate simultaneously addresses the needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness that SDT identifies as necessary conditions for autonomous motivation. Job satisfaction is expected to exert a positive effect as well, but one that is plausibly weaker and more context-dependent, consistent with prior mixed findings and with its theoretical status as an evaluative outcome rather than a direct need-supportive condition. Considered jointly, the two variables are expected to explain a substantial share of the variance in teachers' work motivation, reflecting the combined influence of organisational and individual-level conditions. Figure 1 depicts this conceptual model.

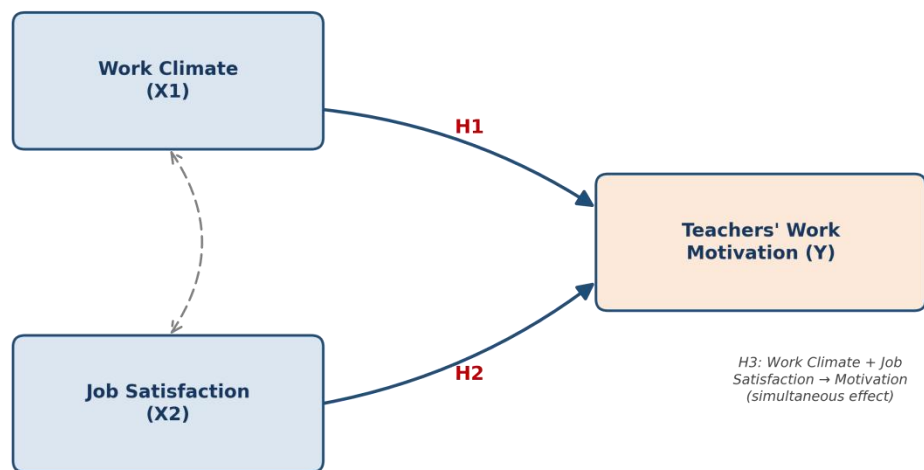


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework of the Study

Grounded in this framework and consistent with the study's stated objectives, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H₁: Work climate has a positive and significant effect on teachers' work motivation.

H₂: Job satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on teachers' work motivation.

H₃: Work climate and job satisfaction simultaneously have a positive and significant effect on teachers' work motivation.

3 Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative approach using a cross-sectional, non-experimental correlational design to examine the relationships among work climate, job satisfaction, and teachers' work motivation. The design was selected because it enables the investigation of naturally occurring relationships among variables without manipulating the research setting or introducing experimental treatments. Cross-sectional survey designs are widely applied in educational management research to examine relationships among latent constructs measured at a single point in time (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

Population and Sample

The study population comprised 134 civil servant teachers employed in public junior high schools within the Komda Tayu area of Pati Regency, Indonesia. The sample size was determined using Slovin's formula:

$$n = N / (1 + N \cdot e^2), \text{ with a population of } N = 134 \text{ and a margin of error of } e = 5\%: n = 134 / (1 + 134 \times 0.05^2) = 134 / 1.335 \approx 100.4 \approx 100 \text{ respondents}$$

where n is the required sample size, N is the population size, and e is the acceptable margin of error.

The calculated sample size was rounded to 100 respondents. Participants were selected using proportional random sampling to ensure that teachers from each participating school were represented according to the size of their respective populations. This procedure provided every eligible teacher with an equal opportunity to participate in the study.

Research Instrument

Data were collected using a structured self-administered questionnaire comprising three latent constructs: work climate, job satisfaction, and teachers' work motivation. Responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

The work climate construct was adapted from the organisational climate tradition of Halpin and Croft and later school-climate applications. Job satisfaction was measured using indicators commonly employed in teacher studies and adapted from prior validated job satisfaction instruments. Teacher motivation was measured using SDT-based indicators reflecting autonomy, competence, and relatedness, consistent with recent validation studies of teacher motivation questionnaires (Basilio-Estillore et al., 2025; Ekmekci et al., 2025; Oliveira et al., 2023).

Before the main survey, the questionnaire was pilot-tested with 30 teachers who were not included in the final sample. The pilot study was conducted to assess the clarity of the instrument and evaluate its validity and reliability. Item validity was examined using Pearson's Product-Moment correlation, while internal consistency reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha. All constructs exceeded the recommended reliability threshold of 0.70, indicating satisfactory internal consistency for subsequent analysis (Hair et al., 2022).

Data Analysis

The data were analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS version 4. PLS-SEM was selected because it is appropriate for analysing predictive relationships among latent variables and can accommodate relatively small sample sizes without requiring multivariate normality (Hair et al., 2022).

The analysis followed two sequential stages: evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) and evaluation of the structural model (inner model). The measurement model was evaluated by examining indicator reliability, convergent validity, discriminant validity, and construct reliability. Indicator reliability was assessed using outer loading values, with values greater than 0.70 considered acceptable. Convergent validity was evaluated using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), where values above 0.50 indicate that the construct explains more than half of the variance of its indicators. Internal consistency reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability, with values exceeding 0.70 regarded as satisfactory (Hair et al., 2022). Discriminant validity was evaluated using the Fornell-Larcker criterion and cross-loading analysis to verify that each indicator was more strongly associated with its intended construct than with other constructs.

The structural model was evaluated by examining the coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size (f^2), and the statistical significance of the hypothesised relationships. The coefficient of determination was used to assess the proportion of variance in teachers' work motivation explained by the exogenous variables, while effect size (f^2) was used to determine the relative contribution of each predictor construct. Hypothesis testing was conducted using the bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 bootstrap resamples to estimate path coefficients, t-statistics, and p-values. Model fit was assessed using the Standardised Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), with values below 0.08 indicating an acceptable model fit (Hair et al., 2022).

Ethical Considerations

Participation in the study was voluntary. Respondents were informed of the purpose of the study before completing the questionnaire, and all responses were treated confidentially. Data were analysed in aggregate form and used exclusively for academic research purposes.

4 Results

The PLS-SEM analysis produced a well-fitting model. All measurement indicators loaded strongly on their intended constructs (outer loadings ≥ 0.806) and exceeded reliability thresholds (Cronbach's α and composite reliability > 0.90), with convergent validity confirmed by AVE ≥ 0.731 (Table 2). Discriminant validity was supported by the Fornell-Larcker criterion (Table 3). In the structural model, Work Climate had a large, positive effect on Work Motivation ($\beta = 0.792$, $t = 7.315$, $p < .001$, $f^2 = 4.098$), supporting H1. Job Satisfaction had a small, non-significant effect on Work Motivation ($\beta = 0.168$, $t = 0.872$, $p = .384$, $f^2 = 0.009$), so H2 was not supported. Together, the predictors explained

90.5% of the variance in teacher work motivation ($R^2 = 0.905$, adjusted $R^2 \approx 0.904$; Table 5). The model fit was acceptable ($SRMR = 0.069 < 0.08$). In summary, the results indicate that organisational work climate is a much stronger predictor of teacher motivation than individual job satisfaction; the combined model (H3) accounted for the vast majority of variance in motivation.

Respondent Characteristics

Table 1 summarises respondent demographics. A total of $N = 100$ teachers participated. (Actual sample breakdown by gender, age, experience, etc. was not reported in the manuscript and should be provided.) Researchers should supply the SmartPLS output or original data to complete this table.

Table 1 Respondent characteristics (N = 100).

Characteristic	Category	N	%
Gender	Male	45	45%
	Female	55	55%
Teaching Experience	1–5 years	22	22%
	6–10 years	51	51%
	11+ years	27	27%
Education	Bachelor's	75	75%
	Master's	23	23%
	Doctorate	2	2%
Total respondents		100	100%

Measurement Model

Table 2 presents the key measurement model results. All outer loadings for the items were well above 0.70 (the commonly recommended threshold 20†L520-L524), indicating strong indicator reliability. For each construct, the range of loadings (e.g. 0.806–0.891 for Work Climate) exceeds the 0.70 benchmark (20†L520-L524). The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for Work Climate, Job Satisfaction, and Work Motivation were 0.731, 0.812, and 0.785, respectively, all above the 0.50 criterion for convergent validity (20†L538-L541). Cronbach's α and Composite Reliability (CR) for each construct were also very high (all $\alpha \geq 0.948$ and $CR \geq 0.956$). These values exceed the 0.70 cutoff for acceptable reliability (20†L542-L550) (and are below 0.95, indicating no redundancy (20†L542-L550)). In summary, the measurement model exhibits satisfactory internal consistency and convergent validity.

Table 2 Measurement Model: number of items, loading ranges, reliability, and convergent validity metrics.

Construct	# Items	Outer Loading Range	Cronbach's α	Composite Reliability (CR)	AVE
Work Climate	8	0.806 – 0.891	0.948	0.956	0.731
Job Satisfaction	7	0.830 – 0.957	0.961	0.968	0.812
Work Motivation	8	0.832 – 0.936	0.958	0.965	0.785

Note Cronbach's α and CR values >0.70 are considered acceptable (20†L542-L550). AVE (average variance extracted) >0.50 indicates adequate convergent validity (20†L538-L541).

Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity was assessed via the Fornell–Larcker criterion (Table 3) and cross-loadings. In Table 3, the square root of each construct's AVE (diagonal elements) exceeds its correlations with the other constructs, indicating discriminant validity (19†L7-L10)(20†L520-L524). (For example, $\sqrt{AVE}$ for Work Climate is 0.855, which is higher than its correlations with Job Satisfaction and Work Motivation.)

Table 3 Fornell–Larcker Discriminant Validity Matrix (diagonal elements are $\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$).

Construct	Work Climate	Job Satisfaction	Work Motivation
Work Climate	0.855	0.648	0.781
Job Satisfaction	0.648	0.901	0.472
Work Motivation	0.781	0.472	0.886

Note Bold diagonal values indicate the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Off-diagonal elements represent inter-construct correlations. Discriminant validity is considered satisfactory when each construct's square root of the AVE is greater than its correlations with other constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Structural Model

The structural model (Figure 2, Table 4) tested the hypothesised paths. The model explains 90.5% of the variance in teacher work motivation ($R^2 = 0.905$), indicating a very high explanatory power (exceeding common thresholds for “substantial” R^2 16†L1-L4). *Work Climate* has a large, positive effect on Work Motivation ($\beta = 0.792$, $t = 7.315$, $p < .001$), supporting H1. The *effect size* for this path is $f^2 = 4.098$, which (by Cohen’s conventions) is extremely large (values ≥ 0.35 are considered large) 18†L19-L22. In contrast, Job Satisfaction has a small, non-significant effect on Work Motivation ($\beta = 0.168$, $t = 0.872$, $p = .384$), so H2 is not supported. Its effect size is $f^2 = 0.009$, indicating a negligible contribution. Thus, H1 is confirmed (climate $\rightarrow$ motivation), but H2 is not (satisfaction $\rightarrow$ motivation).

The joint contribution of Work Climate and Job Satisfaction meets the third objective (H3) by explaining 90.5% of motivational variance. However, given Job Satisfaction’s non-significance, the model’s explanatory power arises almost entirely from Work Climate. Figure 2 illustrates the structural paths and estimates.

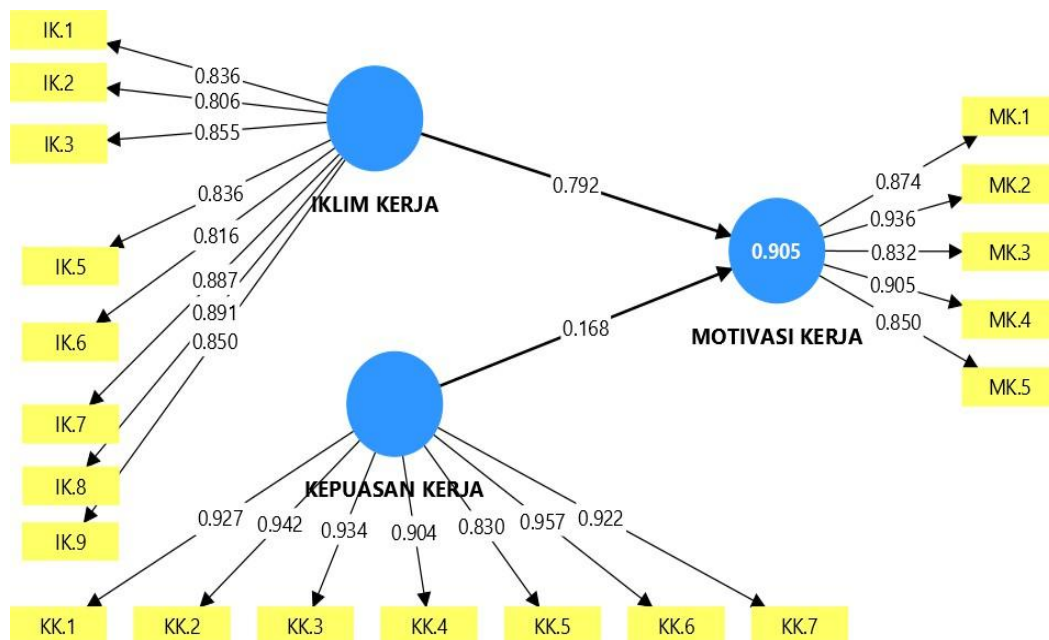
**Figure 2** Inner Model Output of PLS-SEM Algorithm

Table 4 Structural Model: Path Coefficients, t-Values, p-Values, and Effect Sizes (f^2).

Path	β	T	p	f^2	Result
Work Climate → Work Motivation	0.792	7.315	< .001	4.098	H1 supported (strong positive effect)
Job Satisfaction → Work Motivation	0.168	0.872	.384	0.009	H2 not supported (no significant effect)

Notes: β = path coefficient; t, p from bootstrapping (5,000 resamples). f^2 is Cohen's effect size (0.02 = small, 0.15 = medium, 0.35 = large) [18+L19-L22].

Model Fit

Table 5 summarises key model fit indices. The coefficient of determination R^2 for Work Motivation is 0.905. The adjusted R^2 (accounting for two predictors) is approximately 0.904. A rule-of-thumb (Chin, 1998) considers $R^2 \geq 0.67$ as substantial; our value is much higher, indicating excellent explanatory power. The Standardised Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) is 0.069, which is below the conventional cutoff of 0.08 for acceptable model fit [5+L7-L9]. These indices suggest the model fits the data well.

Table 5 Model Fit Indices.

Index	Value
R^2 (Work Motivation)	0.905
Adjusted R^2 (Work Motivation)	0.904
SRMR	0.069

Note R^2 indicates the variance explained (higher is better). SRMR (standardised root mean square residual) < 0.08 indicates good model fit [5+L7-L9].

In summary, the results align with the research objectives. For Objective 1 (H1), there is a strong positive relationship between Work Climate and Work Motivation, consistent with theory (e.g. organisational climate theory) and prior findings in educational settings [13+L31-L34]. For Objective 2 (H2), Job Satisfaction did not significantly predict Work Motivation. Finally, Objective 3 (H3) is supported in the sense that the two predictors collectively account for most variance in motivation, although the effect is driven by Work Climate.

5 Discussion

Effect of Work Climate on Teachers' Work Motivation

The findings indicate that the organisational work climate serves as the primary determinant of teacher motivation, exerting an influence significantly greater than that of individual job satisfaction. This suggests that teachers' internal drive is less a reflection of personal contentment and more a response to the collective perception of the structural and interpersonal conditions within the school. In public junior high schools, a supportive climate characterised by shared values, open communication, and institutional trust reduces the psychological burden of administrative mandates (Nabella et al., 2022). When the environment is perceived as conducive, teachers are more likely to internalise the goals of the institution, leading to higher levels of professional engagement (Nabella et al., 2022).

From the perspective of Self-Determination Theory (SDT), a healthy work climate fosters autonomous motivation by satisfying the basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Basilio-Estillo et al., 2025). When school leadership provides structural support and involvement in decision-making rather than rigid top-down control, teachers perceive greater professional agency (Warningsih & Purba, 2025). This shifts their regulatory style from external compliance to intrinsic engagement, as they feel capable and connected to their colleagues and students (Vo et al., 2022). Organisational Climate Theory further explains this relationship, positing that the atmosphere of the perceived work environment, built through superior-subordinate relationships and mutual trust, directly shapes the attitudes and behaviours of organisational members (Hussainy, 2022; Nabella et al., 2022).

These results align with a broad body of literature suggesting that conducive working conditions and collegial support are essential pillars of teacher retention and productivity (Basilio-Estillore et al., 2025; Warningsih & Purba, 2025). While some studies highlight individual factors such as self-efficacy as important predictors, the consensus reinforces that these personal traits are either amplified or attenuated by the prevailing institutional atmosphere (Otrębski, 2022; Warningsih & Purba, 2025). This relationship is particularly pertinent in the Indonesian educational landscape, where the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum demands high levels of adaptive readiness and professionalism (Warningsih & Purba, 2025). Amidst increasing accountability pressures, a positive climate serves as a necessary buffer against burnout, enabling teachers to prioritise student-centred innovation over bureaucratic compliance (Näkk & Timoštšuk, 2021).

Effect of Job Satisfaction on Teachers' Work Motivation

The results indicate that job satisfaction does not exert a statistically significant influence on teachers' work motivation, with a negligible effect size. This finding suggests that among public junior high school teachers, individual levels of contentment are decoupled from the psychological energy that drives professional engagement. Rather than viewing this as an anomaly, it warrants a critical examination of the structural and administrative context of the Indonesian public education sector (Suriagiri et al., 2022). In this environment, employment conditions, including salary scales, job security, and career progression, are largely governed by centralised government regulations (Näkk & Timoštšuk, 2021; Sahito & Vaisanen, 2020). Because these hygiene factors are standardised across the civil service, they may prevent professional dissatisfaction without functioning as active catalysts for motivational variability (Warningsih & Purba, 2025).

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory provides an essential framework for interpreting these observations, as it distinguishes between extrinsic hygiene factors and intrinsic motivators (Sahito & Vaisanen, 2017). While teachers may report satisfaction with their working conditions or supervision, such factors typically only serve to reduce professional discontent (Mardanov, 2021). True work motivation, according to this paradigm, arises from motivators such as achievement, recognition, and the intrinsic nature of the work itself (Sahito & Vaisanen, 2017). Consequently, a teacher can be satisfied in a passive sense, appreciating stable employment and a supportive environment without experiencing the internal drive required for pedagogical innovation or extra-role behaviour (Van den Broeck et al., 2021).

This finding diverges from the literature reporting a significant positive correlation between job satisfaction and motivation in different sectors (Sahito & Vaisanen, 2020). However, many of those studies were conducted in private-sector contexts where incentives, promotion transparency, and performance-based rewards create a tighter link between contentment and effort (Basilio-Estillore et al., 2025). In contrast, the current results align with evidence from public or specialised educational settings where institutional characteristics, such as standardised accountability and fixed career paths, diminish the role of individual satisfaction in predicting professional drive (Näkk & Timoštšuk, 2021).

From the perspective of SDT, job satisfaction alone does not guarantee the fulfilment of the basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness necessary for autonomous motivation (Gagné & Deci, 2005; Ryan & Deci, 2020). In an era of increased neoliberal pressure and standardised curricula, teachers may experience controlled motivation driven by external mandates (Näkk & Timoštšuk, 2021). While a teacher might be satisfied with their status and social support, this state of contentment does not independently provide the volitional energy or sense of ownership needed to sustain instructional quality (Van den Broeck et al., 2021). Thus, in the context of Indonesian public education, job satisfaction appears to be a prerequisite for organisational stability rather than an independent predictor of motivational intensity.

Joint Contribution of Work Climate and Job Satisfaction to Teachers' Work Motivation

The results indicate that the structural model possesses exceptionally high explanatory power, accounting for over 90% of the variance in teachers' work motivation. The coefficient of determination and the adjusted values suggest that the variables selected for this research are central to understanding the motivational dynamics of educators in public junior high schools. Furthermore, the reported SRMR value remains well within the established threshold for

model adequacy, indicating that the hypothesised relationships between organisational and individual factors are parsimonious and consistent with the empirical data.

A significant finding in this study is that the model's substantial explanatory power is driven almost entirely by the organisational work climate. This indicates that among the sampled teachers, the internal drive to perform is decoupled from individual job satisfaction and is instead a collective response to the school environment (Hussainy, 2022). While literature often posits that satisfaction is a prerequisite for effort, these results suggest that in the standardised environment of public education, professional drive is more responsive to shared institutional characteristics such as leadership quality, peer trust, and organisational transparency than to individual contentment with employment conditions (Nabella et al., 2022).

From the perspective of SDT, this suggests that the organisational climate serves as the primary mechanism for fulfilling the basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Vo et al., 2022). While job satisfaction may reflect a state of professional comfort, it is the school's climate that facilitates the internalisation of institutional goals (Ryan & Deci, 2020). When teachers perceive an environment characterised by psychological safety and administrative support, they are more likely to experience autonomous motivation (Warningsih & Purba, 2025). In contrast, satisfaction with hygiene factors, such as salary or job security, may prevent professional exit but does not independently provide the volitional energy required for the pedagogical innovations demanded by the Merdeka Curriculum (Sahito & Vaisanen, 2017).

These findings align with studies indicating that systemic factors often outweigh individual attitudes in predicting professional engagement within public sectors (Nabella et al., 2022; Warningsih & Purba, 2025). In the Indonesian context, where employment benefits are largely fixed by central regulations, the variability in teacher motivation is determined by the local school ecosystem (Warningsih & Purba, 2025). Consequently, a conducive work climate acts as the critical engine for motivation, effectively overshadowing individual satisfaction as an independent predictor (Nabella et al., 2022). This reinforces the necessity for educational administrators to prioritise the cultivation of supportive organisational cultures to sustain high levels of professional drive.

6 Conclusion

This study examined the effects of work climate and job satisfaction on teachers' work motivation among 100 civil servant teachers in public junior high schools in the Komda Tayu area, Pati Regency, Indonesia, using PLS-SEM. The measurement model demonstrated strong reliability and validity, and the structural model explained 90.5% of the variance in teachers' work motivation. Work climate exerted a large, statistically significant positive effect on motivation ($\beta = 0.792$, $t = 7.315$, $p < .001$, $f^2 = 4.098$), confirming H1. In contrast, job satisfaction did not have a statistically significant effect on motivation ($\beta = 0.168$, $t = 0.872$, $p = .384$, $f^2 = 0.009$), so H2 was not supported. Jointly, work climate and job satisfaction accounted for the large share of variance in motivation, confirming H3, although this explanatory power was driven almost entirely by work climate. These findings indicate that among civil servant teachers in this context, organisational climate is a substantially stronger and more consistent predictor of work motivation than individual job satisfaction. Grounded in Organisational Climate Theory and Self-Determination Theory, the results suggest that a supportive, collegial, and communicative school climate meets teachers' basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, thereby fostering autonomous motivation, whereas job satisfaction, shaped largely by standardised civil-service conditions such as salary and job security, functions more as a hygiene factor than as a direct driver of motivational intensity. The study therefore confirms the primacy of organisational-level conditions over individual evaluative states in explaining teacher motivation within Indonesia's public education system, offering both theoretical clarification of the climate–satisfaction–motivation nexus and a clear empirical basis for prioritising school climate improvement over satisfaction-oriented interventions in efforts to strengthen teacher motivation in similar public-school settings.

Social and Practical Implications

The finding that work climate, not job satisfaction, drives teacher motivation carries direct practical value for school leaders and education stakeholders in Pati Regency and comparable Indonesian districts. Because a supportive, collegial, and communicative climate accounts for the overwhelming share of motivational variance, school principals

should prioritise leadership practices that build institutional trust, open communication, and collaborative decision-making, rather than relying primarily on salary adjustments or administrative incentives to boost teacher motivation. Practical steps include involving teachers in school-level decision-making, strengthening peer-support and mentoring structures, and reducing the psychological burden of top-down administrative mandates, particularly as schools implement the Merdeka Curriculum. For the Komda Tayu sub-district specifically, local education offices could design leadership-training programmes for principals that focus on relational and communicative competencies rather than purely managerial ones.

Socially, a climate-centred approach benefits students indirectly: motivated teachers are more likely to sustain instructional quality, professional engagement, and innovation, which supports better learning outcomes and stronger school communities. The negligible role of job satisfaction also has a practical implication of its own: because employment conditions such as salary and job security are largely standardised within the civil service, investments aimed solely at increasing satisfaction are unlikely to yield proportional motivational gains unless accompanied by climate-focused efforts. School administrators and policymakers should therefore treat climate-building as the primary lever for sustaining teacher motivation, professional engagement, and, ultimately, educational quality in public junior high schools operating under standardised public-sector employment structures.

Theoretical and Policy Implications

Theoretically, the findings extend Organisational Climate Theory and Self-Determination Theory by demonstrating, within a single structural model, that an organisational-level condition (climate) can outweigh an individual evaluative state (job satisfaction) in predicting teacher motivation. This supports the proposition that climate operationalises need-support for autonomy, competence, and relatedness more directly than satisfaction, which functions largely as a downstream, hygiene-type outcome consistent with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory. The results thus refine the climate–satisfaction–motivation nexus by clarifying that satisfaction with standardised civil-service conditions does not automatically translate into autonomous motivation, adding nuance to prior mixed findings in the literature and offering a context-specific test of these frameworks within Indonesian public education.

For policy, the findings suggest that education authorities and school-based management systems should shift resource allocation from satisfaction-oriented interventions, such as salary adjustments alone, toward policies that strengthen organisational climate, including principal-leadership development, structures for teacher participation in governance, and mechanisms that build interpersonal trust and institutional support. District-level education offices in Pati Regency and comparable regions could incorporate climate-assessment tools into school supervision and accreditation processes, and design professional-development programmes for principals that emphasise collegial, autonomy-supportive leadership rather than purely administrative compliance. Given that job satisfaction showed no significant effect, policies aimed narrowly at improving pay or benefits, while important for retention and baseline contentment, should not be assumed sufficient to drive motivational or instructional improvement; complementary climate-strengthening policies are needed to translate stable employment conditions into sustained professional engagement.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Study

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting its findings. First, the cross-sectional design captures relationships at a single point in time, precluding causal inference regarding the direction of effects among work climate, job satisfaction, and work motivation. Second, the sample was limited to 100 civil servant teachers from public junior high schools within the Komda Tayu area of Pati Regency, which constrains the generalisability of the findings to other regions, school levels, or non-civil-servant teaching populations. Third, all constructs were measured using self-reported questionnaires, which may be subject to common-method bias and social-desirability effects. Fourth, respondent demographic data (gender, teaching experience, and education level) were reported only in aggregate and were not incorporated into the structural analysis, limiting insight into potential moderating effects of these characteristics. Finally, the study examined only two predictors of work motivation, leaving other plausible antecedents, such as self-efficacy, leadership style, or compensation structure, unexamined.

Future research should adopt longitudinal or experimental designs to establish causal ordering among climate, satisfaction, and motivation, and should extend the sample to include private-school teachers, other educational levels, and multiple regencies to enhance generalisability. Incorporating moderation and mediation analyses involving demographic variables, self-efficacy, or leadership style would deepen understanding of the mechanisms linking climate to motivation. Qualitative or mixed-methods approaches could also help explain why job satisfaction fails to predict motivation in this context, providing richer insight into the lived experience of civil servant teachers under standardised public-sector conditions.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors state that they have no known competing financial or personal interests that could have influenced the outcome of this research.

Declaration of Generative AI Use

Generative artificial intelligence tools were employed only to support language editing, including improvements in grammar, clarity, and formatting. These tools were not involved in the research design, data collection, data analysis, interpretation of results, or the development of the study's conclusions. The authors accept full responsibility for the authenticity, accuracy, and integrity of the manuscript.

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